

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of the pending claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application:

1. (Original) A method for packaging crabmeat comprising the steps of:
  - providing a packaging vessel;
  - placing a volume of crabmeat into said packaging vessel;
  - adjusting a volume of air within said packaging vessel to obtain an air to crabmeat ratio such that undetected anaerobic bacterial growth is prevented;
  - sealing said packaging vessel; and
  - pasteurizing said sealed packaging vessel.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said packaging vessel is a flexible pouch.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein said flexible pouch is comprised of a multi-layered film.
4. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein said multi-layered film comprises:
  - at least one layer of polyethylene terephthalate;
  - at least one layer of nylon;
  - at least one layer of aluminum; and
  - at least one layer of cast polypropylene.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said sealing step includes the use of a partial vacuum.
6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2 ~~where in~~ wherein said air to crabmeat ratio is at least 6% by volume.
7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2 wherein said air to crabmeat ratio is about 20%

by volume.

8. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein said air to crabmeat ratio is about 13-20% by volume.

9. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein said air to crabmeat ratio is about 6-43% by volume.

10. (Original) A packaged crabmeat product comprising:

- a packaging vessel;
- a volume of crabmeat placed into said packaging vessel; and
- a volume of air within said packaging vessel, said volume of air being adjusted to obtain an air to crabmeat ratio such that undetectable anaerobic bacterial growth is prevented, wherein said packaging vessel is sealed and pasteurized.

11. (Original) The packaged crabmeat product of claim 10 wherein said packaging vessel is a flexible pouch.

12. (Original) The packaged crabmeat product of claim 11 wherein said flexible pouch is comprised of a multi-layered film.

13. (Original) The packaged crabmeat product of claim 12 wherein said multi-layered film comprises:

- at least one layer of polyethylene terephthalate;
- at least one layer of nylon;
- at least one layer of aluminum; and
- at least one layer of cast polypropylene.

14. (Original) The packaged crabmeat product of claim 11 wherein said air to crabmeat ratio is at least 6% by volume.

15. (Currently Amended) The packaged crabmeat product of claim 11 wherein said air to crabmeat ratio is about 20% by volume.

16. (Original) The packaged crabmeat product of claim 11 wherein said air to crabmeat ratio is about 13-20% by volume.

17. (Original) The packaged crabmeat product of claim 11 wherein said air to crabmeat ratio is about 6-43% by volume.

18. (New) A method for packaging crabmeat comprising the steps of:

- providing a flexible pouch;
- placing a volume of crabmeat into said flexible pouch;
- placing a volume of air into said flexible pouch;
- after said air and said crabmeat have been placed into said flexible pouch, controlling said volume of air placed into said packaging vessel to obtain an air to crabmeat ratio such that undetected anaerobic bacterial growth within said flexible pouch is prevented;
- sealing said flexible pouch; and
- after said sealing step, pasteurizing said flexible pouch.